

WE CLAIM:

1. A process for preparing an aqueous composition comprising heating an aqueous mixture to a temperature in the range of about 60 to about 100°C for a period of about 1 to about 120 minutes, the aqueous mixture comprising about 1.5 to about 45 weight percent whey protein concentrate, calculated as dried product, about 1 to about 15 weight percent starch, about 0.15 to about 6 weight percent of a first hydrocolloid, and about 0.03 to about 3 weight percent of a second hydrocolloid.

2. A process according to claim 1, wherein the whey protein concentrate is in liquid or powder form.

3. The process according to claim 1, wherein the starch is selected from one or more of the group comprising waxy maize starch, corn starch, pea starch, wheat starch and potato starch.

4. The process according to claim 1, wherein the first hydrocolloid is selected from the group comprising one or more gums and the second hydrocolloid is selected from the group comprising one or more gel-forming heteropolysaccharides.

5. The process according to claim 4, wherein the gum is selected from the group comprising carob bean gum, guar gum, gum arabic, xanthan gum or tara bean gum.

6. The process according to claim 4, wherein the gel-forming heteropolysaccharide is selected from the group comprising carrageenan or agar.

7. The process according to claim 4, wherein the process

is carried out under pressure.

8. An aqueous composition obtainable by the process as claimed in claim 7.

9. Use of the aqueous composition as claimed in claim 8 as a texturizing and/or stabilizing agent in dairy products.

10. The use according to claim 9, wherein the dairy product is selected from the group comprising yogurt, sour milk, cream cheeses and soft white cheeses.

11. The use according to claim 9, wherein the dairy product is a low fat dairy product.

12. The use according to claim 9, wherein the dairy product is a high protein dairy product.

13. The use according to claim 12 wherein the dairy product is low fat/high protein soft white cheese.

14. A food composition comprising a dairy product base and an aqueous composition as claimed in claim 8 in a ratio, based on the food composition, of about 30 to about 80 weight percent of the dairy product base and about 70 to about 20 weight percent of the aqueous composition.

15. The food composition according to claim 14, wherein the dairy product base is selected from the group comprising bases for yogurt, sour milk, cream cheese and soft white cheese.

16. The food composition according claim 15, wherein the dairy product base is a low fat dairy product base.

17. The food composition according to claim 14, wherein the dairy product base is a high protein dairy product base.

18. The food composition according to claim 17 wherein the dairy product base is low fat/high protein soft white cheese base.